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MayDay call initiates MAJAID response

Simulated ferry collision

Rising beacon issues

New GSAR agreement in Nova Scotia

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SAR SCENE

The Canadian Search and Rescue Magazine Online

Summer/Fall 2004 Vol. 14, #2

New Joint Rescue Co-ordination Centre opens in Victoria

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SAR *SCENE*

Produced by the National Search and Rescue Secretariat

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ALTER EGO

Facts and opinions in SAR*SCENE* are those of the individual contributors and do not necessarily reflect the position or policies of the Secretariat.

Editor: Lori MacKay

E-mail: lmackay@nss.gc.ca

Communications Director: Elizabeth Katz

E-mail: ekatz@nss.gc.ca

National Search and Rescue Secretariat
275 Slater Street, 4th floor
Ottawa ON K1A 0K2

Phone: 1-800-727-9414
Fax: (613) 996-3746
Web site: www.nss.gc.ca

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National avalanche centre receives federal support

With new federal support, the National Avalanche Centre can start building on avalanche safety programs that will save lives in all areas of Canada where avalanches threaten human activities, says Clair Israelson, Executive Director of the Canadian Avalanche Association (CAA).

David Anderson, former Minister of Environment, announced three year funding earlier in 2004.

An expansion of the CAA, the National Avalanche Centre will focus on six objectives:

- Co-ordinate public avalanche safety programs
- Provide a public avalanche warning system
- Deliver public avalanche awareness and education problems
- Provide avalanche-related training for amateur backcountry recreationists
- Be the point of contact for public, private and government avalanche information
- Encourage avalanche research

"Public use of Canada's mountains is increasing and as a result, more people are exposed to avalanche risk," said Mr. Israelson. "We can do better, and we will."

Juan officially retired from list of hurricane names

With urging from Environment Canada, the World Meteorolcgical Organization (WMO) has retired the hurricane name 'Juan' and has replaced it with 'Joaquin' on its list of names.

This is the first time that Canada has requested the retirement of a hurricane name. The request was made because of the devastation Hurricane Juan caused in Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island in late September 2003.

Names are usually replaced when a hurricane has caused serious economic impact, loss of life or considerable damage. More than 50 other names have been withdrawn and replaced on the WMO's list.

Smaller, low-cost 406 MHz ELTs now available

A new, smaller and low-cost 406 emergency locator transmitter (ELT) is now on the market. Its lower cost makes it more accessible to small aircraft owners.

Introduced by EMS Technologies, the new ELT weighs 2.1 lbs, has a six-year battery life cycle and has been COSPAS-SARSAT certified to operate at the 406 MHz and 121.5 MHz frequencies. Included on the ELT are a remote switch, a whip antenna and a buzzer to alert crews of accidental activation.

The cost of this new ELT is $998 US.

New approach for boating awareness campaign

The Canadian Safe Boating Awareness Committee, comprised of the Canadian Safe Boating Council (CSBC), the Canadian Coast Guard and others, has developed a new program to deliver the safe boating message to communities across the country.

This year's messages focus on personal flotation device wear, safe boating education, dangers of drinking and boating, use of proper safety equipment, navigation rules on the water, weather and other environmental factors that affect boating safety.

"Unlike with previous campaigns," said Ted Rankine, Past President of

the CSBC, "I am pleased to report that Safe Boating Week is not over for this year. Its concept, and even its name, was changed to reflect the fact that the safe boating practices we promote during the week should be carried 'onboard' throughout the season."

The key for the program was to develop professional, compelling content and deliver it to Canadian boating safety advocates and the local media.

Newspapers and cable companies continue to deliver boating safety messages to viewers, with tailor-made information to keep their local communities safe on the water.

Little Prince wreckage found after 60 years

The wreckage of author Antoine de Saint-Exupéry's military plane was found in early April 2004, almost 60 years after it plunged into the Mediterranean Sea near Marseille, France.

Saint-Exupéry, known for his book, *The Little Prince*, was on a solo flight in July 1944 when he disappeared.

At the age of 26, Saint-Exupéry became a mail service pilot flying from France to South Africa and helped pioneer mail routes between France and South America. An aviation leader, his experiences are described in his other books, *Southern Mail* (*Courrier sud*), *Night Flight* (*Vol de nuit*), *Flight to Arras* (*Pilote de guerre*), *Airman's Odyssey*, *Wisdom of the Sands*, *Letter to a Hostage* (*Lettre à un Otage*) and *Wind, Sand and Stars* (*Terre des hommes*).

It is not known what caused the 44 year-old veteran pilot to crash.

Labrador helicopters remembered

After 41 years of service as Canada's primary search and rescue (SAR) aircraft, the CH 113 Labradors have retired.

In June, a Lab send-off was held at CFB Trenton, with a demonstration of the Labrador's flying abilities. For the final celebration, two SAR Techs jumped from the Lab at 10,000 feet to land in the Bay of Quinte in front of CFB Trenton. After sending off flares, the pair was picked up by a near-by rescue boat and then hoisted back into the Lab.

The event was hosted by 424 Transport and Rescue Squadron at 8 Wing Trenton, marking the official transition to the CH 149 Cormorant.

On July 27, the Labrador was inducted into the Canada Aviation Museum at a ceremony attended by over 200 people, including The Honourable Mauril Bélanger, Associate Minister of National Defence, and Mr. Lorne RodenBush, Honourary Colonel (424 Squadron) and the first Canadian Labrador pilot.

In July, the Canada Aviation Museum received the first Labrador to enter service 41 years ago. A ceremony was held at the museum to mark the occasion. Left to right: Lorne RodenBush, First Labrador Pilot; Anthony Smyth, Director General of the Canada Aviation Museum; the Honourable Mauril Bélanger, Associate Minister of National Defence; Major-General Richard Bastien, Assistant Chief of Air Staff; Jean Murray, Executive Director of the National Search and Rescue Secretariat; and Captain Mark Levesque, last Labrador pilot. The Lab's engines are being converted for use elsewhere in the Canadian Forces.

New alerting detection booklet

Developed by Transport Canada and the Canadian Coast Guard, the booklet *Alerting, Detection and Response - Dealing with Accidents at Sea* provides safety information to small vessel fish harvesters.

It describes the Canadian search and rescue system and the services available when dealing with marine accidents, and includes contact information for the Joint Rescue Co-ordination Centres and Maritime Rescue Sub-Centres.

The booklet is available at Office of Boating Safety and Marine Communications and Traffic Services offices across the country.

SAR*SCENE* 2005

In October, Prince Edward Island's Emergency Measures Organization will co-host SAR*SCENE* 2005 in Charlottetown. Watch the NSS website for more information.

RCMP equipment supports partnership

In Alberta, the RCMP is responsible for delivering search and rescue services in approximately 95 per cent of Alberta's geographic area. Search and rescue volunteers are integral partners in the RCMP's service delivery strategy. In 2002, the search community contributed approximately 6,700 volunteer hours to assisting the RCMP during search operations. In 2003, that increased to over 10,000 hours.

To support the search volunteers in delivering quality service, the RCMP in Alberta identified 45 computers and 170 handheld spot lamps in surplus inventory for long term loan to the Search and Rescue Association of Alberta. The agreement was finalized in November 2003, and the equipment delivered by year end.

Seascape prototype launched in Newfoundland and Labrador

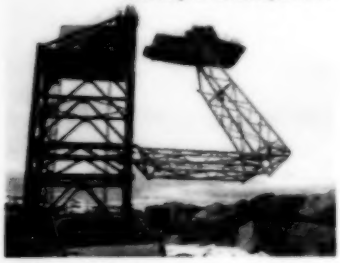
In April 2004, the prototype of the Seascape lifeboat evacuation system developed by Seascape 2000, took to the waters in Portugal Cove, Newfoundland and Labrador.

Sponsored by Transport Canada and funded by the New Search and Rescue Initiatives Fund, the project was designed to enhance the safety of off-shore drilling personnel in an emergency. The Seascape system

consists of a 30-metre long articulated steel arm launching system with a lifeboat at the end.

The launch arm, resembling a crane, would be attached to the oil rig to lower the lifeboat and personnel safely into the water in the event of an emergency.

Courtesy of Seascape 2000



After all the tests are complete, the prototype will remain at Portugal Cove for one year with full exposure to the elements. At the end of the year, the system will then be tested to ensure it continues to function safely and effectively.

Technology enhances multi-agency response

by Martin Torn

A new satellite communication and coordination system, the Real-Time Emergency Management via Satellite (REMSAT II), has been deployed operationally in the Lillooet area in support of the British Columbia Forest Service (BCFS) Protection Branch actions on the Seton Lake and Town Creek wildfires. The REMSAT II system was recently demonstrated at two simulated wildfires at Whistler and Silver Star, B.C., following which, the system was deployed directly to the Lillooet fires.

Developed in Canada, REMSAT II is an undertaking of the European Space Agency in collaboration with the Canadian Space Agency. Consortium partners for the project include Telesat Canada, the B.C. Forest Service, the Communications Research Centre, Simon Fraser University, and the B.C. Ambulance Service.

The REMSAT II is an advanced communication and emergency response coordination system that combines satellite communication, navigation, location tracking and earth observation space technologies for emergency management. The system includes many capabilities, including real-time GPS tracking of response personnel and equipment, digital messaging in the field, portable satellite-based voice and data communications, and a deployable, self-contained, mobile computing and communications module that supports the incident command team decision-making process.

For more information, visit the project website at *www.for.gov.bc.ca/protect/remsat/*

Martin Torn works with REMSAT II at Selkirk Systems Inc.

First National SAR Program Annual Report published

The first Annual Report about the National Search and Rescue (SAR) Program Report in Canada is now available online.

Produced by the National Search and Rescue Secretariat, the report includes information about the organization of the National SAR Program, activities during the past year, and the issues and trends that are being addressed, such as responses to major air and marine incidents, multi-jurisdictional exercises, interoperability and the growth in high-risk recreational activities.

The Annual Report, along with the Annual Program Plan and Strategic Directions, represent the planning framework for the National SAR Program.

Visit *www.nss.gc.ca* and click on **Reports** for more information.

Colour coding for Sea Ice Charts formally adopted

With the widespread use of electronic navigational information systems, the importance of including colour coding for sea ice charts in the World Meteorological Organization's (WMO) "Sea Ice Nomenclature" has been recognized.

As a result, the 2000-01 International Ice Charting Working Group prepared a draft colour standard.

In 2002, participating ice services produced charts with the colour codes and after few changes, the new standard was adopted by the WMO Secretariat.

For more information visit the Canadian Ice Service site at *http://ice.ec.gc.ca/*

Forum called on mandatory PFD wear

The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) will hold a public forum in late August at the NTSB Academy in Ashburn, Virginia to discuss the mandatory use of personal flotation devices (PFDs).

According to the NTSB, United States Coast Guard figures show only five per cent of adults in open boats wear PFDs.

The same data indicates approximately 450 lives could be saved each year if the victims were wearing PFDs.

The agenda for the August 25 forum includes:

- New PFD technology
- Alternatives to mandatory wear rules
- The impact of federal and/or state legislation mandating wearing of PFDs
- Vessels and types of operation that should be covered in, or exempted from, mandatory wear rules.

For more information or to register, visit *www.ntsb.gov*

Grateful father thanks Saskatchewan volunteers

At the fourth annual Search and Rescue Saskatchewan Association of Volunteers (SARSAV) conference in Porcupine Plain, Sask., a grateful father was able to thank SAR volunteers for finding his son.

In the particularly moving address, a father gave a personal account of what

Conservation officer Daryl Minter and his canine partner, Zoro.

it is like to have a child missing. He thanked the SARSAV volunteers for their role in locating his son alive and well, and expressed his gratitude for the compassionate way in which his family was treated during the crisis.

SARSAV President Bob Smith noted, "We seldom get to feel the other side of our activities. It was especially gratifying to have the family attend our conference and provide their input."

The mid-April conference included an intensive schedule of seminars, practical training and refresher qualification courses.

But in addition to the opportunity to train together, the annual conference gave participants the chance to learn how teams from other parts of the province handle issues such as motivation, fundraising, relationships with external agencies and maintaining public profile. It also provided organizations a valuable opportunity to meet the volunteer SAR community first-hand and exchange information.

At the awards ceremony, several SARSAV members were recognized for their contributions to SAR, including a special RCMP commendation presented by Sgt. Don Dunk to Conservation Officer Daryl Minter, a SARSAV volunteer and canine handler with Saskatchewan Environment. In March 2004, Daryl and his partner "Zoro" drove across the province to join the search for an elderly man lost in the bush near Prince Albert. Fighting fatigue, they were instrumental in locating the man who was, by then, too weak to stand or call out, saving him from certain death.

The conference also featured a SAR Games challenge, where teams from across the province participated in a friendly competition that tested navigation, search management, general knowledge, and casualty handling skills. Competition was fierce, but the *Qu'Appelle X-Treme Rescue* team emerged as this year's champions.

Exploits win Newfoundland and Labrador Ground SAR Games

Exploits, the winning team at the Newfoundland and Labrador Ground Search and Rescue Association games, will represent the province at the 2004 *SARSCENE* Games in Calgary, Alberta on October 13.

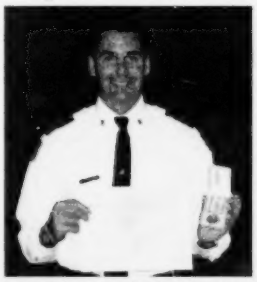
Held during the Association's annual training weekend in Gros Morne, Nfld., the games had seven teams competing in events on search management, survival skills, medical skills, navigation skills and a mystery event where teams had to answer skill testing questions about SAR tools of the trade.

Close to 100 volunteers and invited guests attended the three days of activities which included presentations on wilderness first aid, Newfoundland and Labrador standards development, working with helicopters, evidence search and a hands-on GPS course.

AWARDS

Calgary Fire Department Aquatic Team wins swiftwater rescue award

The Calgary Fire Department's (CFD) Aquatic Rescue Team has captured the highest international award for excellence in swiftwater rescue. It's the first time a Canadian dive team has received the Higgins and Langley Memorial Award for Outstanding Achievement in Swiftwater Rescue, acknowledging superior preparedness and vigilance in the community to prevent injury and death on local waterways.



Keal Prince, CFD Aquatic rescue team.

Aquatic Rescue Program coordinator and training officer, Keal Prince, attended a ceremony in Lansdowne, Virginia on behalf of the Fire Department to receive the award.

"Our search and rescue specialists were tops among 20 to 25 other world agencies competing for the same award," said Prince. "This is a huge feather in our cap for the Fire Department and the City of Calgary."

All 50 aquatic rescue team members were recognized for dedication to emergency readiness, teamwork and success in building a public education program that has been readily embraced by the community.

In June 2002, just upstream from the weir, the team saved three people after their rubber inflatable capsized. Photo by Darrell Uruski

Prince said the judges, who were unanimous in bestowing the honour, were impressed with the program layout, the high level of training and the sheer diversity of the service.

"CFD divers have raised the bar in program excellence through developing specialties in aquatic rescue, swift water diving, ice diving, evidence recovery and forensic investigation," said Prince.

Fire Chief Wayne Morris, himself a founding member of the aquatic rescue team in 1976, said winning this award attests to the quality of people who have dedicated so much of their professional life and much of their personal time to making the program the success that it is.

The team has accomplished much in its 28-year history. Calgary had a number of drownings in the early 1970s, mostly at the weir section of downstream Bow River. Working with Alberta Environment to create the Weir Safety Team, another phase of the aquatic rescue program, there has not been one drowning since.

"That kind of unselfish commitment to protecting the lives of others," said Prince, "is the essence of the aquatic rescue team."

The Higgins and Langley Memorial Award is named after Earl Higgins and Jeffrey Langley. Higgins, a writer and filmmaker, lost his life in 1980 while attempting to rescue a child caught in a flood-swollen Los Angeles River. Langley was a firefighter/ paramedic with the Los Angeles County Fire Department, who lost his life in a helicopter incident in 1993.

Excerpted from LINK with permission from the Calgary Fire Department

Transport Canada announces 2004 Marine Safety Awards

For their efforts to improve safety standards and dangerous work environments on board fishing vessels, George Chafe and Charles Roberts were presented with Transport Canada's 2004 award for outstanding contribution to Canadian maritime safety.

Presented at the biannual meeting of the Canadian Marine Advisory Council by former Transport Minister Tony Valeri, the award was deserved because "Mr. Chafe and Mr. Roberts have demonstrated exception commitment to the fishing industry over the past 20 years."

The award was established in 1997 to increase awareness of marine safety in Canada and to recognize those who have made an exceptional contribution to this objective.

Canadian Safe Boating Awards

Presented at the Canadian Safe Boating Council dinner in early 2004, the sixth annual Canadian Safe Boating Awards (CASBAs), recognized those who have made a difference in boating safety.

The 2003 winners and their categories include:

- Heather McDonald, Safe Boater of the Year
- Michael and Will Pratt, Canadian Power and Sail Squadron's "Rescue of the Year"
- Greg Meaker, Marine Professional of the Year
- Austin Gilbert, Top Volunteer Dedicated to Safe Boating
- La Fédération québécoise du canot et du kayak, Best Boating Safety Campaign
- Ontario Marine Operators Association, Environmental Campaign of the Year
- Fox 40, Best New Marine Safety Product
- Monto Reno Marina, Green Marina Environmental Initiative Award
- Salus, Marine Manufacturers Award
- Canadian Coast Guard Auxiliary, Special Recognition Award
- Natasha Fudge, Special Recognition Award
- Edmonton Squadron of the Canadian Power and Sail Squadron, Special Recognition Award

The CASBAs were developed to honour the people, programs, organizations and marinas that are helping to make boating in Canada safer and better for everyone and to keep the environment clean.

To learn more about the CASBAs, visit the Canadian Safe Boating Council website at *www.csbc.ca*.

Two volunteers commended for daring hovercraft rescue

by Patrick Ciavaglia

A member of the Barachois Search and Rescue Team of Nfld. and a local volunteer firefighter received Royal Canadian Mounted Police Commanding Officer's Commendations for a daring hovercraft rescue Feb. 7, 2004.

On April 13, 2004, team member Pat McCarthy and firefighter Peter Hall were presented with the award for saving three snowmobilers' lives after their machines became half-submerged in Bay St. George on the west coast of Nfld. Both men braved white-out conditions and the risk of being swept into open water, which was only 15 feet from the rescue site. Hall was forced to stand in the freezing, slushy water for 40 minutes while McCarthy shuttled the three victims to shore, one-by-one, in the two-seater hovercraft.

The Barachois team purchased the hovercraft with their own money for just such a situation. They raised $10,000 by holding "the usual fundraisers" and contracting out their parking and traffic control services at community events.

The used hovercraft underwent minor repairs and had a new skirt installed before delivery to the Barachois team two years ago.

103 Squadron wins Laureate award

The five crew members of the Gander, Nfld. 103 Search and Rescue Squadron have been recognized a second time for their January 2003 rescue of the Finnish freighter *Camilla*.

Awarded the Laureate award from aviation industry magazine, *Aviation Week and Space Technology*, the crew is the first in Canada to win in the category of Operations.

Major Gilbert Thibault, Captain Andrew Mercer, Master Corporal Rob Vidito, Sergeant Emilio Dechantal and Master Corporals Dave Cooper and Scott Elliston received the award in April 2004 and were inducted into the Laureate Hall of Fame at the Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum in Washington, D.C.

MCpl. Scott Elliston described the mission as a difficult one, especially because of the stormy weather conditions. The Cormorant was at risk of hitting the drifting ship due to 70 km/h winds and 10 m waves crashing

Continued on next page

New Joint Rescue Co-ordination Centre opens in Victoria

by Patrick Ciavaglia

Western Canada's Search and Rescue (SAR) co-ordination capabilities became more efficient with the opening of the new Joint Rescue Co-ordination Centre (JRCC) in Victoria, last April.

Canadian Air Force and Canadian Coast Guard personnel helped design the command centre when the project began about two years ago. Besides having more space to work in, the layout enhances the on-duty officers' ability to communicate with each other, both electronically and verbally.

Built close to the old centre in a building that was constructed in 1901, the new JRCC is designed to improve the functionality of monitoring and coordinating response to SAR incidents.

Equipped with the Search and Rescue Mission Management System, officers are now flanked by several low mass flat-screen monitors that display near real-time information on sea and air activity in the area.

While the new set-up will help facilitate daily operations, the real advantages will be witnessed when a major SAR call comes in. A unified command centre, with glass doors so officials can observe the control room, is incorporated into the layout.

This room has screens displaying all the latest information on the mission so concerned officials can keep up-to-date without getting in the officers' way. As well, there are media terminals for the representatives to maintain contact with their superiors.

Patrick Ciavaglia was a Communications Officer on contract with the National Search and Rescue Secretariat during the summer of 2004.

over the deck, while it hovered for more than 70 minutes over the disabled freighter.

Past President of SAR Alberta wins NASAR award

Corporal John Rotheisler of 4 Wing Cold Lake and past President of the Search and Rescue Association of Alberta, was recognized at the 2004 National Association for Search and Rescue (NASAR) Conference for his work in search and rescue.

Cpl. Rotheisler won the NASAR State/Canadian Province Award "in recognition of the exemplary dedication and consummate professionalism exhibited through involvement in national, provincial and local search and rescue organizations and community groups."

In 2003, Cpl. Rotheisler was the recipient of a Certificate of Achievement from the National Search and Rescue Secretariat. ■

MayDay call initiates MAJAID response

When a British Airways flight northeast of Gander, Nfld., declared a MayDay due to fire and smoke problems in the cockpit on March 11, 2004, the Canadian Forces Major Air Disaster (MAJAID) response was alerted and the Hercules containing the MAJAID kit was prepared and en-route towards Gander.

All tasked resources were standing by in case the plane crashed, including a Cormorant from 103 Squadron, but fortunately the British Airways flight landed safely in Gander and the potential disaster was averted.

MAJAID is the Canadian Forces emergency response plan to a major air incident that exceeds the resources of a responsible Joint Rescue Co-ordination Centre. The plan provides for far-reaching search and rescue (SAR) services in the remote regions of Canada, especially the high Arctic. There are four, 80 person kits which contain supplies, such as tents, medical supplies, a field hospital, a six-wheeled all-terrain vehicle, rations, environmental clothing, and more, to help people survive, even in the most extreme weather conditions. The MAJAID kits provide for 320 persons for 72 hours, but can be augmented by equipment from the primary SAR aircraft.

The kits are located at CFB Trenton, the central Canadian Forces Base, allowing for rapid deployment in any direction across Canada, and each kit contains the same supplies.

The crash of flight Swissair 111 off the coast of Nova Scotia marked the first time MAJAID had been mobilized for an air crash in Canada, but it was soon called off when it became clear there were no survivors.

In most cases, where events unfold rapidly, it is much better to activate the MAJAID plan and later have to stand down resources than to have to activate them late in the incident and risk not having them in time.

With increased travel to the North, the Canadian Forces has also developed Arctic Cache kits as part of the MAJAID plan. Six caches, consisting of emergency survival clothing and sleeping bags, will be located in Iqualuit, Yellowknife, Rankin Inlet, Resolute Bay, Inuvik and Whitehorse. These kits can be used on their own for any SAR distress, or used in conjunction with a MAJAID kit. ■

The CC-130 Hercules aircraft, which drops the MAJAID kits, burns 5000 lbs of fuel per hour.

Upcoming Events

United States Coast Guard Auxiliary's 2004 National Conference (NACON)
September 2-4, 2004, Costa Mesa, California

The Pararescue Association of Canada 60th Anniversary Reunion
September 9-12, 2004, Winnipeg, Manitoba

Tri-State SAR Conference
September 15-19, 2004
Belleayre Mountain Ski Area, Highmont, New York

International Snow Science Workshop (ISSW) 2004
September 19-24, 2004, Jackson Hole, Wyoming

National SAREX 2004
September 20-25, 2004, Comox, British Columbia

Annual Canadian Safe Boating Council Symposium
September 23-26, 2004, Whistler, B.C.

SAR*SCENE* 2004
October 13-16, 2004, Calgary, Alberta
Toll free: 1-800-727-9414

Emergency Preparedness Conference
October 25-27, 2004, Vancouver, BC

International Search and Rescue Competition (ISAR)
November 4-7, 2004, Portsmouth, Virginia

SAR 2005, NASAR
March 8-10, 2005, Miami, Florida

SAR 05
May 25-28, 200
Oakland, California

For a complete list, visit *www.nss.gc.ca* and click on **Events**

Search and rescue exercise simulates ferry collision

by Derek Smith

A multi-jurisdictional marine search and rescue (SAR) exercise was held in the entrance to the Saguenay Fiord at the beginning of May 2004.

The exercise was jointly organized by ferry operators Société des Traversiers du Québec, the Canadian Coast Guard (CCG) and a local tour boat operator. CCG Québec Region directed the event.

Along with the CCG and the ferry company, Famille Dufour, Croisières AML operators of St. Lawrence excursion vessels, local Emergency Management Organizations (EMO), police agencies, Parks Canada and the Canadian Coast Guard Auxiliary (CCGA) participated. The shipping companies used their participation in the exercise to practice and verify their own emergency procedures.

The scenario was a simulated collision between a Saguenay River ferry, the *Jos-Deschênes* and a large excursion vessel, the *Cavalier Grand Fleuve*.

The scene just moments before the ferry, Jos-Deschênes, *and the excursion vessel,* Cavalier Grand Fleuve, *collide.*

Courtesy of Hubert Degagnés, Exercise Director

The event began at 7:30am on May 2, with an exercise Mayday call. Both CCG and CCGA units, including the cutter CCGS *ISLE ROUGE*, responded to evacuate 'casualties' and to direct on-scene operations to search for and recover survivors. The 'survivors' from the distressed vessels were landed at the Government Quay at Tadoussac and at Baie St. Catherine, where the local EMOs had set up reception points.

Casualty handling, survivor recovery and reception, and personnel accounting procedures were all tested by using both live volunteer 'survivors' and simulating large numbers of persons with a series of numbered planks, some of which were dropped into the water to simulate persons who had

Evacuation chutes and life rafts are tested as crew and 'passengers' abandon ship.

Courtesy of Hubert Degagnés, Exercise Director

gone overboard in the accident. The ferry *Jos-Deschênes* went alongside the Quay at Tadoussac and the vessel's life rafts and evacuation chutes were tested by the ship's crew in a live evacuation.

Overall, the CCG, vessel operators and local authorities were pleased with the results of an interesting exercise. It was a valuable test of emergency plans and good opportunity for groups to exercise their procedures and coordinate their response. ■

Derek Smith is a Senior Analyst at the National Search and Rescue Secretariat, on exchange from the Maritime and Coastguard Agency in the United Kingdom.

Nova Scotia first in Canada to establish guidelines for volunteers with Parks Canada and EMO

by Ginny Miller

Guidelines are now in place to ensure consistency when Nova Scotia's ground search and rescue (SAR) volunteers assist in searches on Parks Canada property.

In early March 2004, the Emergency Measures Organization (EMO), the Nova Scotia Ground SAR Association and Parks Canada signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) outlining the roles and responsibilities of each organization when searches for lost or missing persons take place in national parks.

This agreement, between Parks Canada and a volunteer group, is the first of its kind in Canada. The need for this agreement came about, in part, because of the distinctly different legislation of Parks Canada. As Mike Lester, executive director of EMO points out, "this agreement was put in place to formalize a process to ensure that rescue procedures would continue as originally intended."

The main purpose of this agreement is to mutually develop standard operating procedures and provide consistency for searches on Parks Canada property.

The backbone of this agreement is the Nova Scotia Ground SAR Association. They take the burden off EMO, and as Mr. Lester puts it, "they deliver the product."

They will also make recommendations to EMO and Parks Canada on improvements to search and rescue training.

Charlie Strickland, president of Nova Scotia's Ground SAR Association said, "this agreement was made possible due to the hard work and support of EMO and Parks Canada, as well as the demonstrated professionalism of the volunteers in Nova Scotia."

An expanded partnership

The SAR program is currently run in partnership with the RCMP, with support from EMO. Air ambulances have assisted searchers and paramedics have joined in searches. Mr. Lester would like to see even more partnering among related groups, including having similar MOUs in place with every municipal police force.

The Nova Scotia Ground SAR Association consists of 24 teams made up of 1,650 highly trained volunteers. The program supplies this pool of volunteers with a command structure and communication strategy that can be applied to a broad range of emergencies. ■

Members of EMO, Nova Scotia Ground SAR Association and Parks Canada put pen to paper to sign the first MOU of its kind for search and rescue volunteers in national parks.
***Front Row** (L-R): Carol Whitfield, Parks Canada; Minister Ernest L. Fage; Charlie Strickland, Nova Scotia Ground Search and Rescue Association. **Back Row** (L-R): Yves Bosse, Parks Canada; Linda Frank, Parks Canada; Keith Crosland, EMO; Mike Lester, EMO.*

Photo courtesy of Communications Nova Scotia

Wilderness first-aid course offers real-life scenarios

by Ginny Miller

"If you're 50 miles into the wilderness, and out of range for 911, don't have a heart attack or break your femur. Most other things you can deal with," says Blair Doyle of Halifax Regional Search and Rescue.

Photos by Blair Doyle

To prepare for guiding a hiking trip in the Gaspé Peninsula, Québec, I enrolled in the Wilderness and Remote First Aid training course organized by Blair Doyle and Andrew Foran, both certified Instructor Trainers for the Red Cross.

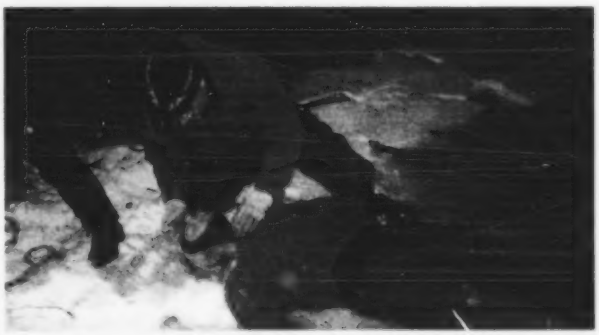
Doyle, who runs Doyle Adventure and Safety, designed a three-day immersion instruction course that attracts outdoorspeople, small craft operators, eco-tourism operators and tour guides.

On the first day, the 20 participants learned the theory and the basics of soft tissue injuries, hypothermia, treating minor injuries, splinting and CPR. The group met again and spent 18 hours putting their new-found knowledge into practice by setting up scenarios and taking turns being victims and rescuers. At night, Doyle and Foran, along with other instructors, set up a mock tragic boating accident on the shore of the lake. There were a number of victims, including a belligerent (possibly inebriated) father, a seriously injured mother and a missing five-year-old boy.

We followed the sounds of distress with just flashlights to guide us. Arriving at the chaotic accident scene, we found a woman screaming for help, holding a child's life jacket. We were able to treat some victims for shock, hypothermia and a broken arm, but the little boy didn't recover.

By Sunday afternoon, the group was emotionally and physically spent, but better prepared for heading out in the woods.

For more information about Doyle Adventure and Safety courses, visit the website at http://users.eastlink.ca/~adventure ■



Ginny Miller is a freelance writer and recent public relations graduate. She has also earned her Wilderness Survival/First Aid certificate.

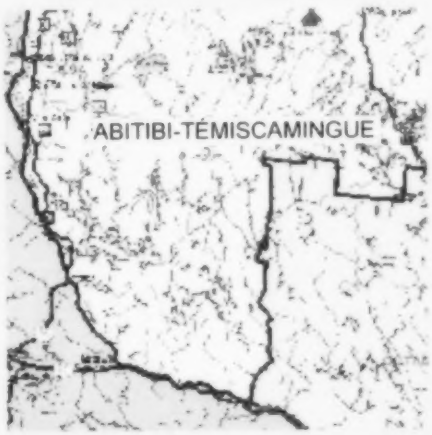
New training tools, standards and equipment

The following five projects are supported by the New Search and Rescue Initiatives Fund.

New equipment helps Québec volunteer group improve communications and response time

Abitibi-Témiscamingue is a remote and rugged region of north-western Quebec. Their volunteer search and rescue (SAR) group often had to rely on borrowed rescue equipment and sought funding to improve their search efficiency, including improved communications and response time. Under the sponsorship of the Sûreté du Québec, and with funding from the New SAR Initiatives Fund, the group now has upgraded SAR equipment, including radios, phones, patient evacuation capabilities and more. The group has also improved SAR prevention by presenting the "Hug-a-Tree and Survive" program to local schools.

Project n° QC 2/02 ■



Group's mobile capabilities increased through funding

The Campbell River Search and Rescue (SAR) team realized it needed updated SAR software and hardware to continue operating effectively, particularly on large or multiple searches.

With funding from the New SAR Initiatives Fund and sponsored by B.C. Provincial Emergency Program, Campbell River SAR will now be able to update old computer hardware and software and train group members to use the SAR Manager and mapping programs.

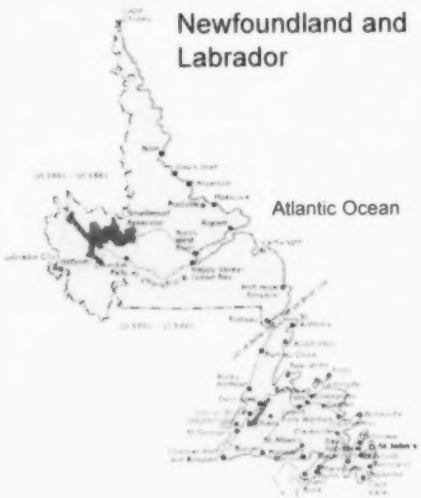
This new equipment will increase the group's mobile SAR capabilities and allow them to work and communicate more effectively with other agencies on searches.

Campbell River SAR's jurisdiction has quadrupled in size because of the disbanding of certain other volunteer groups, so having a mobile command unit is now more important than ever.

Project n° BC 10/04 ■

Newfoundland and Labrador develops customized training standards

With 900 members and 27 teams across the province, the Newfoundland and Labrador Search and Rescue Association (NLSARA) wanted to develop a regionally customized set of training and proficiency standards in line with adopted national ground search and rescue (SAR) criteria.



Sponsored by the Department of Justice and funded in part by the New SAR Initiatives Fund, the Association also plans to formalize and share the Boating Safety Partnership Model for Community-Based Program Delivery that exists between NLSARA and the regional

improve teams' search and rescue delivery

Office of Boating Safety.

The teams are responsible for both ground and inland water searches and the formalization of the partnership model will solidify the partnership between the Office of Boating Safety and NLSARA.

The new training program will include GPS training and digital map interfacing for use by ground SAR teams in isolated areas.

Project n° NL 1/04 ■

New avalanche learning tools for enhanced multi-agency response

A new strategy for managing multi-agency search and rescue (SAR) avalanche operations is being sponsored by British Columbia's Royal Canadian Mounted Police E Division.

This new strategy addresses basic avalanche safety measures and combines existing best practices for a multi-agency SAR response. With funding from the New SAR Initiatives Fund, the strategy is geared at paid and unpaid SAR volunteers.

The program allows participants to learn at their own pace through distance learning tools, such as video footage, sound clips and animation, virtual avalanche scenes, self-assessments, chat rooms and links to other sites. Participants will gain a better understanding of avalanche emergency response and their roles and responsibilities in an incident.

Participants won't just have to imagine what happens in an avalanche, but will experience the event through the tools.

Although developed in B.C., the program will have application in other avalanche-prone regions in Canada.

Project n° RCMP 2/04 ■

Improved rescue capabilities allows team to offer best chance of survival

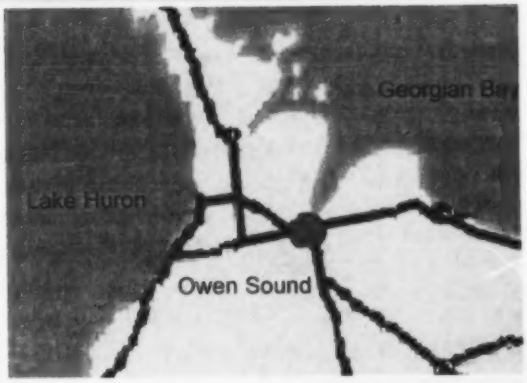
The Owen Sound Fire and Emergency Services' (OSFES) goal is to improve its marine search and rescue (SAR) capabilities and provide people involved in marine or air incidents the best chance at survival.

Funded by the New SAR Initiatives Fund and sponsored by Emergency Measures Ontario, the OSFES group will be able to improve its rescue capabilities, including spotting someone in distress and transporting victims to safety.

The team works in cooperation with the Canadian Coast Guard and provides 24/7 coverage of waters surrounding Owen Sound.

Not only are the waters busy with recreational boaters, but the number of flights from the nearby airport has increased from 3,920 in 2002 to approximately 8,000 in 2003. Many of these flights occur over the waters of Owen Sound.

Because acute hypothermia can develop rapidly, an improved response capability is essential.



To improve response and provide the best chance of survival, the team will obtain an inflatable platform, night vision monoculars, stretcher, shield, flotation kit and radar.

Project n° ON 4/04 ■

For more information about the New SAR Initiatives Fund, visit *www.nss.gc.ca* and click on **New SAR Initiatives** in the top menu bar.

Working towards a common radio frequency

The lack of a common radio frequency has been one of the biggest obstacles to seamless search and rescue (SAR) among SAR providers. Often they have had to create work-around solutions when they were unable to communicate on a common frequency. The status quo is no longer acceptable.

Now, a working group established by the National Search and Rescue Secretariat under Marc Parent, who is on assignment from the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, is paving the way to an efficient and affordable solution for a search and rescue inter-agency national calling frequency (SARIAN F).

The first job of the working group was to develop a good understanding of the extent of the problem across the country. The group is comprised of experts in the field of SAR operations and radio communications.

"An important step," said Inspector Parent, "was getting Industry Canada, the federal department responsible for assigning radio frequencies, on board. They have been a great help with this issue and agreed to participate in the working group."

Other members of the group include 35 representatives from national volunteer groups, Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police, provincial and territorial emergency management programs, provincial police departments and federal departments involved in SAR.

At the first meeting, a conference call was held in June 2004. Each jurisdiction outlined their situation and the degree to which a lack of a common frequency hinders search and rescue. A more detailed approach is underway to look at the various agencies within a jurisdiction and their current communications infrastructure.

A SAR inter-agency national frequency

There is unanimous support for identifying one frequency to make initial contact among SAR responders from different agencies.

The group advocates an additional two simplex and three duplex frequencies to ensure the ground SAR component has adequate spectrum to conduct their operations. The group also advocates establishing a national air-to-air frequency for SAR operations so volunteer groups, commercial and private aircraft can communicate more effectively when involved in a search.

The biggest challenge is to identify frequencies that would be available in the VHF range between 136 and 174 MHz, which was seen as the most effective for ground SAR operations which mostly use those frequencies now. In most cases, it would simply be a matter of reprogramming existing radios rather than buying new equipment. However, teams using wide banding might need new equipment. The working group realizes the potential issues and is looking for solutions.

Increasingly, first responders are moving towards spectrums other than VHF, because of a lack of efficiency, but more as a result of a lack of available VHF frequencies. Resorting to other spectrums, for example UHF or 800 MHz, would pose additional problems to SAR responders because of the nature and requirements of their work.

Related concerns

Cost is a constant concern throughout the discussions. Various funding mechanisms were discussed by the working group, including an application to the New Search and Rescue Initiatives Fund to assist with the potential cost of new equipment.

For aircraft, which use VHF AM, a common frequency poses an additional challenge, notably in the North where air assets are used in most incidents. The Civil Air Search and Rescue Association, a member of the working group, is seeking solutions.

Once the frequencies are identified, two other needs emerge — communicating the frequency to everyone concerned and reducing radio license fees, particularly for the volunteers. Current Industry Canada regulations require every radio owner of land frequency to register and pay a fee for use of the frequency. The working group believes that ideally volunteers should not have the burden associated with licensing fees for the registration of radio equipment used to save lives.

Next steps

Looking down the road, the implementation of the SARIAN F will not only enhance SAR operations, but it will also facilitate radio communications between other first responders such as police and fire departments who could use the SARIAN F to make initial operational contact. It is also conceivable that Canada and the United States could expand the common frequency to create a seamless North American search and rescue system on either side of the border. ■

2004 Beacon Manufacturers Workshop

by Chantal Pétrin

In May, a Beacon Manufacturers Workshop was held in Florida, hosted by The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. This workshop was a forum to discuss issues that affect beacon users and officials who operate the COSPAS-SARSAT system.*

Beacon re-coding

The question of the cost for re-coding a beacon frequently arises. There is, in fact, no charge for re-coding a new beacon, just the cost of shipping and handling. For a used beacon, the charge is approximately $75 US, plus shipping and handling and this could be done in as little as three business days. On the other hand, during busy seasons, it could take up to 10 to 14 business days.

Beacon testing

The National Search and Rescue Secretariat (NSS) often receives inquiries about test activations of 406 MHz beacons. Previously, owners of 121.5 MHz beacons were able to test their beacons without having to worry about being fined. This was done by pushing a test button at specific times in the day. Now, however, a test is not necessary because each 406 MHz beacon, more advanced than the 121.5 MHz, is built to specifications outlined by COSPAS-SARSAT.

Should a 406 MHz beacon be activated by the owner for a test, it is considered to be a false activation and heavy fines could be applied. For more information about false activation and related fines, visit *http://laws.justice.gc.ca/en/R-2/index.html* under "Offences and Punishment."

Life span of a beacon

The life span of beacons varies, but the normal life span for a Personal Locator Beacon (PLB) and an Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacon (EPIRB) is 10 years. An Emergency Locator Transmitter (ELT), on the other hand, should last the life of the aircraft.

Beacon manufacturers

Beacon manufacturers are indeed difficult to find, but for an up-to-date list, visit the COSPAS-SARSAT website at *www.cospas-sarsat.org/Beacons/beaconManufactureList.htm* for information. If you still require help, please contact the NSS at 1-800-727-9414.

Topics of the workshop included low-cost beacons, ship security alerting system, the International Beacon Registration Database and more.

Disposal of beacon batteries

All beacons come with a manual which explains when to replace your battery and the importance of proper disposal. Batteries can be taken to a battery recycling site or a beacon service centre. For more information about responsible battery disposal, contact the beacon manufacturer.

Maritime Mobile Service Identities

There is some confusion about who provides the nine digit maritime mobile service identity (MMSI). A unique, internationally standardized number, the MMSI is provided by Industry Canada. For more information, visit *http://strategis.ic.gc.ca/epic/internet/insmt-gst.nsf/en/sf01742e.html* to find your regional office. ■

Chantal Pétrin is the Beacon Registrar at the National Search and Rescue Secretariat in Ottawa.

**COSPAS-SARSAT is the international satellite system launched by Canada, France, the United States and the former USSR in 1982 that will receive the signal of an emergency beacon and relay the beacon position to rescue authorities.*

Important notice

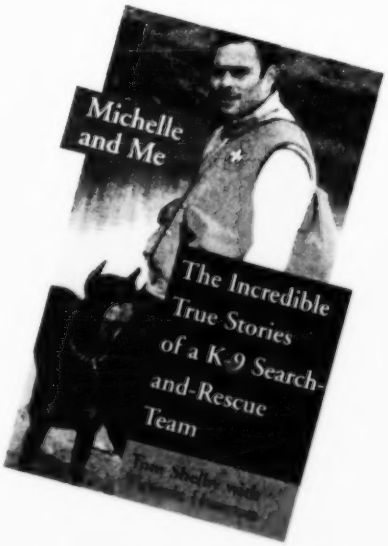
As of February 2009, the signal for 121.5 MHz beacons will no longer be received by COSPAS-SARSAT; therefore, these beacons will become ineffective.

Remember, the most important thing to do is to register your beacon. It can save your life! For more information, call 1-800-727-9414, or log onto *http://beacons.nss.gc.ca/Logon.asp?lang=e*

BOOK REVIEW

Michelle and Me: The Incredible True Stories of a K-9 Search and Rescue Team

by Lori MacKay



Take one Doberman pinscher with a glow-in-the-dark necklace and a dog lover-turned-trainer and what do you have? The remarkable canine search and rescue team of Tom Shelby and his dog, Michelle.

Michelle and Me: The Incredible True Stories of a K-9 Search and Rescue Team, by Tom Shelby with Victoria Houston, is a charming book filled with a variety of stories about different searches in which they participated.

The book has an informal style and is an easy read which makes it all the more compelling. The writing is vivid and the reader can easily picture him or herself at the scene, following Shelby and Michelle on the search.

Through many of the searches, Shelby is learning as he goes, but one thing he truly believes in is to "trust the dog."

Throughout each chapter, there are explanations of techniques and procedures that would be interesting for both those involved in search and rescue (SAR) and those who just love a good story.

For example, for those not familiar with canine SAR the explanation about the difference between air scenting and tracking as well as the benefits and disadvantages of both gives more insight into the complexity of the task at hand.

Not only does Shelby describe the successful searches, but he details the frustrating searches when the person is not found.

For example, Shelby and Michelle search for a young man who has run away from a detention centre. Michelle picks up the scent of a fugitive and tracks him through a barn, a cemetery, woods, past an encounter with a mountain lion only to lose the scent abruptly in the middle of the road. Shelby later found out the fugitive had gotten into a car at the very point Michelle had lost the scent.

Each chapter is a new story, but not always about SAR. Some chapters are engaging anecdotes about dog behaviour and training tips Shelby uses to help owners with their dogs.

Throughout the 175 pages, you gain a deeper appreciation for SAR volunteers and how hard they work, no matter what time of day or year.

Whether you're a dog fan, dog trainer or part of a SAR team, you don't want this book to end. ■

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